

Recruiting via Text:

A Complete Guide to
Winning Over Candidates

nexxt




With almost all adults (97%) in the U.S. owning smartphones, it only makes sense for the recruitment industry to shift toward the mobile landscape. Many Americans are now using their smartphones to **apply to jobs**, but filling out an application on mobile isn't always the most intuitive process. Thankfully, more effective ways of using mobile recruitment have been established. One of the fastest growing of these new methods is text campaigns.

Text campaigns have many benefits compared to traditional hiring methods. They allow recruiters to make direct contact with job seekers while providing candidates with a more discreet way of receiving job opportunities. In addition, text messages allow employers to edge out the competition by starting conversations with potential candidates even if they aren't actively applying to jobs.

Text messages have an amazing open rate of 97%, which makes sense—when was the last time you ignored a text message? It's predicted that global phone usage will surpass the **7.49 billion** mark by 2025 with no signs of stopping. In 2021, the average mobile user spent a total of 5 hours and 15 minutes on their phone **each day**. Email, which only sees an average **21% open rate**, is opened on mobile devices 81% of the time.

If you are interested in exploring this rapidly growing channel, but don't know where to start, this guide is for you. Even if you have delved into the world of SMS text recruiting, our insight will provide tips and advice on building a candidate-winning SMS text recruiting strategy.

First things first, let's cover the basics...



97%
text message
open rate

› SMS Texting Compliance

As expected, text messages sent from businesses to consumers have strict regulations from the Federal Communications Commission. Recruitment text messages are not held to the same consent-based protections under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act. However, you still must obtain consent from the recipient.

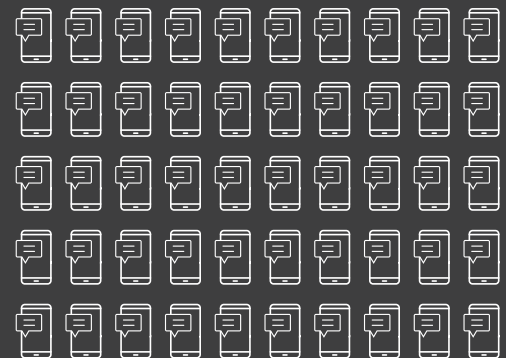
It's important to provide...

- **Notice to your candidates.**
Make it clear they are consenting to receive text messages. If you collect mobile number through your ATS, include an SMS text opt-in so that you have the ability to text them in the future.
- **A clearly written opt-in.**
Never contact a candidate who has not explicitly opted in to receiving recruitment opportunities via text. Best practice is to require the user to actively check an opt-in box (preferably next to the field where they entered their cell number)—as opposed to pre-checking the box for them. This shows that the candidate clearly intended to opt-in, rather than simply opting in because they continued to the next step in the process.
- **An opt-out method.**
Even though candidates will consent to receiving texts, you should be prepared for them to change their mind. That could be including an option to stop receiving texts in the message itself, or simply having a plan in place should someone request to be removed from the list. Obvious desires to opt-out



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2010, at one point, Papa John's sent 500,000 texts that violated the text consent rules. They had to pay a \$16.5 million settlement.



are replies that read, “stop” or “unsubscribe.” But, you’ll also want to monitor for people who responded with unique language, such as, “I just got this phone so don’t know why you are texting me!,” which can happen if the person who opted in gives up their cell phone number. Be sure to track those who opt-out and remove them from all text campaigns. If you don’t, it will not only negatively impact your recipient’s approval of your brand, but it can also get you into trouble with the carriers or the government.

NOTE: Never send a text to a candidate who has not explicitly signed up to receive opportunities via SMS text messaging.

› Connecting with Candidates

It can be overwhelming to approach text recruiting when you consider all the rules and regulations involved. There are two great solutions to connect with candidates in a compliant and friendly manner.

The first is to develop your own list of candidates to text. This can be done by using your career site, and enabling candidates—or even site visitors—to opt-in to receive text messages. If you haven’t been doing this and want to build your list faster, try emailing your entire talent pool and invite people to opt-in. The second option works for companies that have connected with and developed lists of interested candidates.

› Managing Text Recruiting Campaigns

As with any recruiting strategy, text recruiting requires maintenance. Candidates are quick to lose interest in companies that don't respond to their applications, so an unanswered text conversation the employer started will surely end in bad candidate experience. You have to be at the top of your game. Here are some text management options:



Traditional

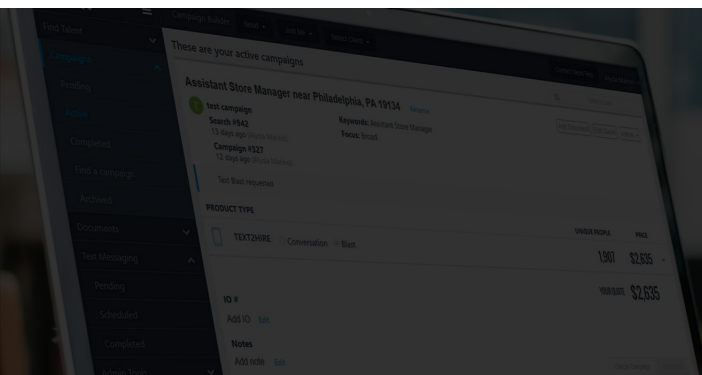
Traditional text messaging is 1:1, and recruiters can do this themselves no different than making a phone call. If you are reviewing a candidate resume and want to contact them, simply send a text instead of an email.

Pros: Direct communication. Don't need to be as concerned with opt-in.

Cons: Very time consuming. Does not work en masse, and doesn't automate or speed up the recruiting process. Also, the recruiter has now given away their personal number to candidates.

When to use: Use of unique positions where you are trying to get top candidates to respond—the same people you might leave a voice message for.

Tips: Be personal. Start your message with, "I hope you don't mind if I reach out to you via text, but I have a position that I think you might be a great fit for..."



Automation



To start a large number of candidate conversation quickly, many organizations turn to automation through an SMS “blast.” Similar to email, a list of candidates is sent a message en masse, and those who respond receive an automatic reply to move the process forward. Pay special attention to your language and how you approach advertising the opportunity so as not to lose a personalized touch or appear spammy.

Pros: Can reach a large number of candidates quickly. Don’t need to have someone monitoring the campaign and responding in real time.

Cons: Loses the personal touch of a real person responding, and can lead to lackluster communications.

When to use: SMS blasts work great if you are promoting an event such as a job fair, or if you are trying to promote jobs that may attract a diverse audience of job seekers, such as customer service jobs

Dashboard



If you work with a company who specializes in SMS text recruiting, you probably have the option to manage your text messages and replies via a dashboard. This enables you to start conversations with interested candidates NOW, and while the initial response is slower, it can lead to faster hires. Often times, employers still use basic scripts and allow multiple recruiters to respond from the dashboard, which speeds up the response times.

Pros: It’s a real conversation!

Cons: Requires the manpower to monitor the responses in real time.

When to use: This works great when you are hiring a number of skilled candidates for high demand positions—such as healthcare, technology and finance or when hiring several candidates for the same position at one time.

Tips: Invite candidates to skip the application. High demand candidates might not have their resume up-to-date, and may not want to go through your ATS process, so let them know that you can move forward with a personal conversation.

> Creating the Perfect Opening Pitch in One Text

Once you have organized the compliant list of candidates to text, there's another challenge to face: *what should you say to them?* This is still very much about making a good first impression. This first text message will carry the weight of your offer and ultimately influence your chance of getting a reply. Concentrate on the message you are trying to convey, keeping it casual enough to not appear spammy or pushy.

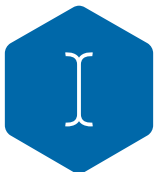


REMEMBER!

There is a 160 character limit to each text for automated text messages. Everything from the greeting to the URL falls into that restriction.



Introduce yourself. No one likes to respond to strangers or wrong numbers, and there's always the chance they forgot they opted-in to receive messages. Be sure you mention the employer you represent so the candidate knows your message wasn't a mistake or attempt at intrusion.



Stick with basic written communication rules. All caps are better left in conversations with your friends. It will look harsh and unprofessional to a candidate. Use appropriate spelling, grammar and punctuation. If you do use abbreviations, make sure they are truly understandable and standard for the industry within which you're communicating.



Be honest with your pitch. What are you offering this candidate? Keep your language excited and interesting, but avoid trying to hide your intent. You know where you want this conversation to go. The candidate will know or catch on fast, so start with transparency. It will only help build trust.



Include a benefit. You are turning to SMS texting in order to get in contact with your candidates as soon as possible. Clearly and concisely explain the benefit of working with you to explore the opportunity. Make it worth their time immediately. And yes, this can simply be an opening within the company but if room allows, feel free to also include available hours (part or full time), pay (salary or hourly) or any number of details (split schedule, weekend hours, growth opportunities, flex-work, etc.)



WWW.

Decide whether to use a dashboard or an automated campaign.

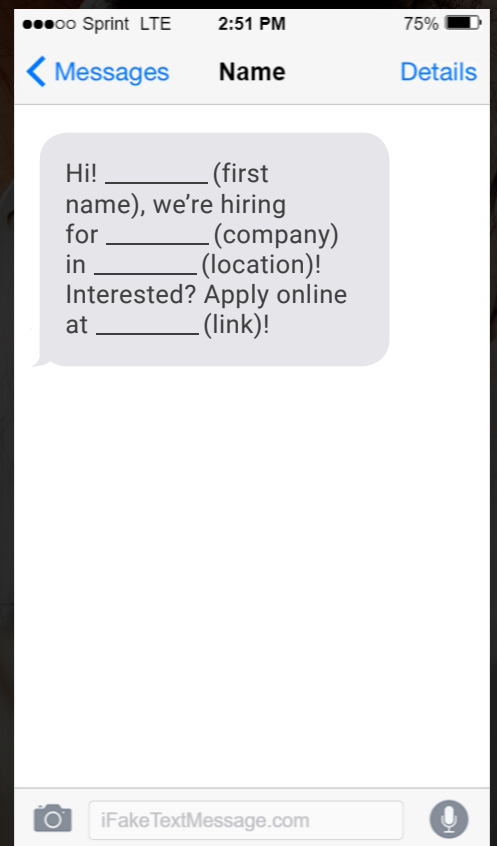
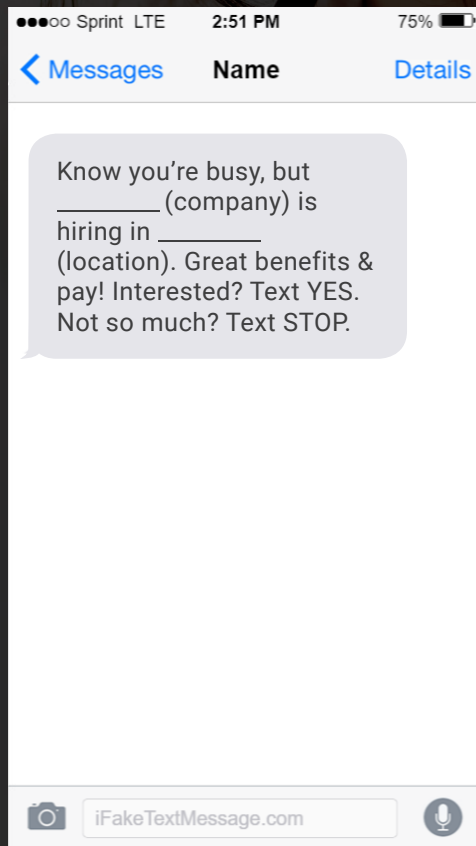
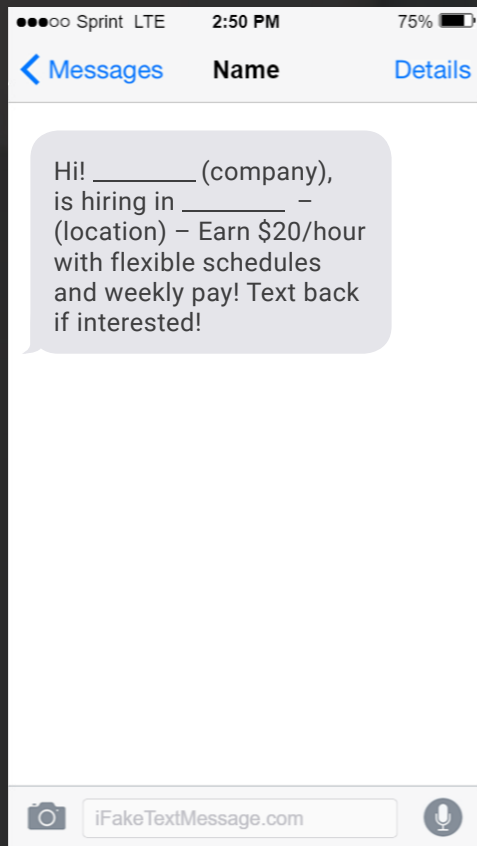
For high-volume recruiting, starting conversations via dashboard is more effective. However, only do this if you are able to have a recruiter monitor the dashboard and carry on live conversations as responses come in. If you don't have the bandwidth—or if you are promoting a hiring event rather than specific openings—then a blast makes sense. For a blast, you will need a landing page to send them to where they can learn more and register. Ideally, the landing page will be customized to the campaign, and it will work seamlessly with the text messages they received.

If you send candidates to a website,
be sure it's optimized for mobile.
They will be accessing it from their
phone after all.



› Seems like a lot to fit into a text, right?

Here's an example with fill in the blanks to get you started:



› Finding the Right Timing & Frequency

The good news is that SMS text recruiting will allow you to communicate with your target candidate easily, regardless of their schedule and availability. The bad news is that you might be waiting for a reply over a day's time. Depending on the job you're recruiting for, it might take 2 or 3 days for certain candidates to even look at their phone, while others may have 24/7 access. Your frequency will need to allow for time to pass without responses.

Try to send the first text within business hours, but don't expect a response then. Wait, at the very least, 2-3 weeks before following up with your initial text. In some cases, follow up isn't even acceptable or encouraged. Cap your correspondence to 2 texts. If by 2 texts there is no response on a specific opportunity, assume the recipient isn't interested. Wait a few months before sending a new offer.

If a candidate does reply, be sure to respond as quickly as possible. Have a plan in place for immediate or quick replies to take advantage of their availability and interest.



› Follow Up without Turning Candidates Off

It's a waiting game after your first text. No response could mean disinterest, that they haven't received the message or they received the message but forgot to respond. And those are only three possibilities. How you tread further can have massive impacts, so it's crucial you have the right follow up strategy.^a

Remember, some candidates are not interested in job opportunities presented via text. Keep your follow up text simple. They can see everything you sent before right there anyway.^b

Greet the candidate again

1

Reiterate the deadline for the opportunity

2

Identify if you will or will not be reaching out again

3

Invite them to connect when and however is most convenient for them

4

NOTE

a If you are using an automated process, be sure you have a clear workflow laid out. If you offer a candidate the option to contact you via an email, it's important they are no longer sent texts. If they would prefer to continue texting, be sure they don't receive a follow up text that alludes to no response. The candidate might even skip a response completely, opting to complete an online form. Though they didn't follow up with your system, they applied, so no further contact is necessary. The point is not to allow the process to seem automated, even if it is.

b Once you've made your initial point of contact, how you proceed is important. Gear your conversation to answering questions and scheduling a phone conversation if the candidate is interested in proceeding.

› Taking the Hint – Know How to Disengage

Remember, some candidates simply don't want to be contacted via their phone. Be proactive by providing other means of communication (your email, phone number, etc.). Move forward with discretion and err on the side of caution when continuing conversations.

Are you interested in connecting with qualified professionals? Find out how many Nexxt can help you reach.

› Finding the Right Solution to Automate Texting Campaigns

Text2Hire™

One of the easiest and most effective ways to reach numerous candidates at once is through Text2Hire.

Text2Hire gives you direct, immediate access to the people you want to hire—and who have already said they are open to receiving career opportunities via text.

97% average open rate

12M+ opt-in candidates

71% of job seekers say they want to get targeted jobs via text

The best way to communicate with candidates is the way they're already communicating.

Learn more about Text2Hire from Nexxt and how it can help you create targeted text campaigns targeted to your specific audience using a database of millions of candidates.








About Nexxt

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